

CHIVALRY AND WAR-TIME

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BEFORE last July most of us took the great blessing of a land at peace quite as a matter of course. Perhaps many of us wish now that we had been more full of thankfulness to God for our happiness while we had it.

The comfort for the women of our nation—and of all nations—in this dark war-time is in giving any kind of help, and the call for Prayer, which comes with a trumpet note not only to the Mothers' Union as a great Prayer Union, but to us all, will surely be gladly obeyed throughout the Empire by an army of the wives, mothers, and other relations of our brave sailors, soldiers, and airmen.

We are constantly reminded to-day that the training of recruits is a very important matter, and it will be felt by mothers, to whom is entrusted the most glorious work

in the world—that of training the Children's Brigade of the Christian army—that this applies strongly to their spiritual work with their own precious infant recruits. Christian soldiers were enlisted at their birth, and welcomed into Christ's army at their Baptism. Their training to be good soldiers of Christ begins as soon as they can understand their mothers' words telling them about their great Captain Who is also the Friend of little children. This war shows us the result of religious teaching which is false instead of true. For years past many learned people in Prussia have disbelieved that our Lord Jesus Christ is God as well as man, and, starting from this point, hideous unbelief has naturally continued to advance. Some writers have reached the point of scornfully contradicting our Lord's loving teaching. The result of darkened minds is seen in the delusion prevalent in Germany that it is right to wage this savage war in order that the Kaiser may rule over Europe.

We have the men of the nation much

in our thoughts at this time. Do we not love to read the glorious stories about soldier, sailor, and airman heroes? These stories, and others which show in such lovely fashion the brotherly feelings towards one another of the different races who are united with us in this fight, are like sunbeams darting out from behind black storm clouds. Daily the news comes of splendid courage and splendid generosity. We read of soldiers gallantly carrying wounded comrades on stretchers from within the firing line, and of doctors, nurses, and chaplains all risking their lives in their work of ministering to the maimed and dying. We read of noble fellows, on both sides, who have gone under fire to bring the wounded *of the enemy* into safety. These deeds have most rightly been called *chivalrous* in the newspapers. We did not often hear that word *chivalrous* before the war. Now we meet with it often in the papers and hear talk about it. It is high praise to call any one chivalrous. We should like all the dear children who are

now growing up to deserve that praise. It is certain that the war itself was, in its beginning, chivalrous on the part of England, for, although we knew that we had nothing whatever to gain and must have unspeakable loss and sorrow through war, we stepped in, mainly because little Belgium was being bullied by big Germany, which like ourselves had signed an agreement to respect her neutrality, and because France was our friend.

Chivalry is like a rainbow formed of many lovely colours. Let us think a little about mothers' work in trying to cultivate *beautiful, chivalrous* characters in their children in the home, and amidst the homely circumstances of daily life. We know how, in the Middle Ages, certain influential men called knights, who were religious-minded, resolved to cultivate and show forth the character of the Christian soldier. These Christian soldiers were *not* to be vain-glorious, but modest; not bullying, but ready to defend the weak. They were not only to be brave, but also unselfish

and generous, honourable, courteous, pure, helpers and defenders of women to the death. The many virtues they practised were expressed in the one word *chivalry*. The women who lived among these knights wished to match them in gentle, womanly graces, and children, especially boys, were trained with great care to imitate their elders. All that was good in the chivalrous character came from seed sown by the teaching of the New Testament ; but the seed fell amongst thorns of worldliness, and after a time became mixed up with pride, and sometimes with folly ; yet still, as the cultivation of chivalry spread from one country to another in Europe, the national character of the people was improved. Heathen people are sometimes chivalrous, but when Christian graces are found where our Lord Jesus Christ does not reign they are then like the seed mentioned by our Lord in the parable of the Sower, which sprang up having no root.

Christian parents wish their children to reach the ideal of chivalry and to progress

beyond it ; to possess all, and more than all, of its beautiful virtues, some of which, like the colours in the rainbow, melt into one another. These virtues make a fine character as far as they go, but in some respects, and notably on one special point, the standard of the religious-minded knights failed to reach that of our Lord. Christian parents would wish their children to believe and to practise *all* that our Master taught.

Five shining virtues in the rainbow of chivalry are : Courage, honourableness, courtesy, unselfishness, purity.

As to *courage*, we are proud to know how many of those brave men, of whom we thought just now, have gone, and are going forth, cheerfully, to defend their country. Some of them leave brave little boys at home. We may well pray that there may be a different use for their fine qualities in the time to come. We, not infrequently, hear of boys and girls who have helped their companions at their own risk in accidents by water and otherwise. Then we all feel that the credit of their

having acted nobly was due to their parents as much as to themselves. Many children are born courageous, but they need to be taught another part of bravery—that it is *cowardly* to bully, or brag, or to take advantage, in any way, of our own greater strength or superior gifts, of any kind, to exalt ourselves or to depress, or get the better of others. It is interesting to see how easily infant boys learn that *because* little girls are weaker than themselves it would be cowardly to hit them, or to behave roughly to them, and that boys should always hasten to help and defend girls when necessary. We want the children to grow up brave *morally* also—not fearing man, but speaking and acting on the side of the right when no one stands with them. Moral courage is a grand quality. Those who possess it are enabled to speak the most difficult words, and to endure bravely pain of body, of mind, and of an aching heart. The grand, dread picture to be seen now on the plains which lie opposite England is a magnificent object-lesson in courage of all kinds.

It is for us lookers-on to learn, and to teach the children, that lesson of heroic doing and enduring ; and if the call upon courage is small in our peaceful homes let us meet it spiritedly. The young should be told that whenever timidity, sometimes called shyness, would prevent our saying or doing anything which seems to be our duty, or which might help any one, or make any one happier, we must not yield to the ignoble feeling, but ask for Grace to overcome the "spirit of fear." Christian soldiers must be *brave*.

Parents wish their children *to be honourable*, i.e. *truthful, upright, and trustworthy*. It needs pains and care to teach the girls and boys that they must be all this in the *smallest things* as well as in large ones ; that through life they must "play the game" and "play fair." Honourable persons keep their word and their engagements. They pay their way ; they fail no one, and are careful to avoid misleading any one. Whenever we sign our names to an agreement we must regard it as binding

upon us; never as only a "scrap of paper."

The worship of money causes much dishonourable conduct, and evil-doing of the nature of theft, not only in the poor and ignorant, but in people well-off and educated. Although there may possibly be less in life now to produce the sin of envious, lawless greed, yet temptations to "covet and desire other men's goods," especially their money, are always with us, and against these the young should be earnestly warned. When the subject of dishonest conduct comes before families, the parents' wise words of comment will make their mark. Not long ago, a youth educated at a public school disgraced himself by misappropriating money entrusted to him by his unsuspecting employer. When it was found out, his younger brother remarked, in disgust: "Well, it's no wonder! When Tom used to play tricks to get more pocket-money out of Dad, Mother always roared with laughter over his rotten cleverness, and never seemed to notice the cheating!" The mother, a

well-meaning person, no doubt would have said, "Tom knew it was wrong to cheat without my telling him so." Yes! But parents are responsible for their silence as well as their speech.

To Christian soldiers trained in the principle "Man doth not live by bread alone," life's warfare will sometimes mean—All for love of God, and the world well lost. Here is an instance. A man whose abilities had won for him an excellent appointment, possessed the sensitive conscience of the Christian man, and when something was required of him which he felt to be an approach to cheating the Government, it seemed to him that he had no alternative but to resign his post. He was in the prime of life, and, instead of working on for years which would have enabled him to retire as a rich man, he had to sink into obscurity and face life as a poor one, unemployed. His action made a great impression upon some hitherto careless people. One young man said: "*Now I believe that religion is a real thing in life,*

not mere *views*—when a man can give up a fine position like that on account of his Christian principles.”

Under the head of *Courtesy* chivalry enjoined gracious speech, and beautiful manners—respectful and self-respecting. It decreed that, as between men and women, when there was any wrong-doing, blame should be *taken* by men, never cast upon women. It cherished the generous spirit which loves to praise, and to which hitting any one when down with words of scorn or reproach is impossible. There has been much pleasant reading during the war of enemies admiring one another's valour: The chivalrous behaviour towards non-combatants and the naval genius of the commander of the German cruiser *Emden*, the ship which has done us so much harm, produced in England an outburst of admiration—which was also chivalrous.

We shall agree that nice manners are a great help to success in life. Good posts are not infrequently given to the applicant least qualified for the work, because he or

she is superior in manner. The teaching of the principle of "ladies first" can be begun with little lads by helping them to their food and their share of all privileges *after* the girls. They will soon learn their lesson, and little girls will be equally quick to take in the idea that when boys, or others, do them any service there should always be a pretty word of thanks. People must be very foolish who do not know that nothing is more contrary to *self-interest* than any transgression of the Apostolic saying, "Be courteous."

It is unaccountable that there should have prevailed in some quarters of late the deliberate practice of rude behaviour towards parents and others, on the part of youngsters and of persons old enough to know better. Apparently, self-assertion is the object of the strange display, but it is really self-lowering. Any exhibition of ugly manners is disfiguring to the whole personality of those guilty of them, just as ugly clothes might be; whereas sweet courtesy beautifies and dignifies all who practise it.

What a lovely virtue is unselfishness! We are told that our Lord "pleased not Himself," and direct teaching is given on this point by St. Paul—"Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." Unselfishness does not come naturally to many little ones; it has to be taught; and if this is not done in childhood, numbers of adults go through life not knowing what *is* selfish, always thinking and acting for self alone as though no one else existed. Family life gives many opportunities for impressing upon the young that in everything we must think about other people and their wants and wishes, and not only about self and our own things. There will be an endless number of stories to tell the growing-up children of the soldiers who forget self to the extent of offering themselves for the long bodily torture of this winter's war, and of cheerfully risking their lives for one another. Youths brought up at home not to be selfish will not be likely when duty loudly calls "Come,"

to answer, "If I do, shall I better myself?"

Here may I say, experience shows that, owing to a natural instinct of chivalry, sons are more influenced by their mothers than by their fathers. God grant that this beautifully rooted influence may be used by every mother to urge her sons to do their share towards bringing to a speedy end the ever-increasing anguish, waste, and misery of war.

The last virtue among those I mentioned is *Purity*—the sin against which is forbidden by the Seventh Commandment. Our Lord's explanation of this Commandment in the Sermon on the Mount shows that it is broken by the smallest sin against purity even in thought. St. Paul said (1 Cor. vi. 19), "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost?"

Those who represented what was called the "Flower of Chivalry" showed forth many virtues, yet the "perfect knight" was but a poor creature beside the grand Figure of our loving and lowly Lord. The

Master Himself must be held up as a model for the practice of Christ-like chivalry. Christian purity must have a higher standard than any worldly one set up in any age. For the world, as distinguished from the Church, holds that, in regard to breaking the Seventh Commandment, the sin which is disgraceful in women is not so in men ; and the knights felt themselves exceptionally good and noble when they practised the purity which they demanded from women, and which they scorned them for lacking. Their chivalry quite broke down here. But Christ distinctly opposed this teaching of His enemy by His action when the unfaithful wife was brought before Him for judgment. He showed sympathy with the woman, avoided adding to her shame even by a glance, and shielded her by turning attention upon her accusers and shaming *them*. He implied that they were sinners, just as she was a sinner. Then, when they were gone out, He uplifted her by His words : " Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more." In deepest reverence be it

said, that was the one display which stands alone on this earth of perfect chivalry.

Whether the Christian truth as to the equal guilt of man and woman when the Seventh Commandment is broken will ever prevail in the world, we do not know ; but we may hope that it is making some advance. Two years ago the *Times* newspaper reported a law case in which a London judge would not allow a solicitor to discredit the truthfulness of a woman witness on the ground that she had gone astray. He said that if a man had done the same thing it would not affect his evidence, neither should it affect a woman's, and he accepted her evidence as truthful.

Christian parents have a solemn duty laid upon them to instruct the young soldiers in the Orders of their Commander on this subject, and to advise them how to walk straight in a difficult world full of dangers and temptations. These dangers and temptations being quite different in different lives, advice should be given by parents to their own children accordingly

—when possible by mothers to daughters, by fathers to sons, so that both girls and youths may know how to behave, and to take care of themselves, in all circumstances.

Now, having thought a little about what mothers can do in training the children's brigade in the principles of Christian chivalry, let us think about the young soldiers already grown up, and placed amidst the peculiar dangers of war-time.

There never was a time, perhaps, when the necessity was greater than at present for Christian purity to be thought about and guarded. Alas! men and women, if not guided by Christian principle, prey upon one another. The war brings before us the deplorable fact that wherever men are banded together to fight for their country they are pursued by women with evil intentions, who are—poor things!—a far worse enemy to the soldiers and to our country than our present bitter enemy across the Channel. And it was said by the noble women who devoted themselves to Rescue work at the end of the first three

months of the war, that during that period there had been a great increase of "white slavers" and their agents. One lady wrote, as quoted in the *Guardian*, "At a time when so many girls are out of work it is particularly necessary to put them on their guard against the machinations of these people." It is well for us to know these things, although, thank God, this fact of unemployment for girls does not exist as yet in many places. Protective measures are being taken on behalf of both men and women against the snares laid for each. But the best protective measures are *preventive* ones, in the shape of parents' earnest teaching of Christian morals. All the people now leading the awful life of tempters of their fellow-creatures were once young and innocent, and probably the vast proportion of them first fell into sin because they had been sent out into the world neither forewarned nor forearmed by Christian teaching at home.

Girls are *modest by nature*, but in order that they may *act* modestly on all occasions

they need instruction as to what they should and should not do. The help of mothers is called for now in a most important matter, viz. the behaviour of young women who have no evil intentions whatever towards the soldiers and recruits. Commanding officers and others speak of the great difficulty in which they are placed where troops are stationed, owing to the undesirable presence of idle girls. There is a kind of excitement in the air in these strange times when every one's warmest feelings are constantly stirred up by what we read in our newspapers, and no doubt many girls feel rather wild. Perhaps they are warm-hearted and a little light-headed. Admiring our defenders for their bravery and their gallant appearance, they hang about wherever they are, try to attract their attention, and are also more flattering and familiar in their manners than usual. Sometimes they visit the camp to see their own special friends, not knowing that they should be content to meet them elsewhere and should leave them alone while

they are with their regiments. The girls mean no harm, yet they are doing great harm, for their conduct is not modest, and therefore they are making it very difficult for the soldiers to feel chivalrously towards them. Added to this, they are doing the terrible injury to the soldiers and to the country of distracting the men's minds from the serious work they have undertaken to do, and of thus wasting their precious time. Men in the army, of all ranks and ages, would be truly thankful to be relieved of this more than unnecessary trial of silly camp followers. They cannot generally be repulsed just because the men *are* chivalrous, and they take advantage of this, which is unchivalrous on their part. But they do not see this themselves. How should the young things do so? It is how the matter appears to us elders. Now here is a fine motherly work to be done whereby sons will be helped as well as daughters. This is, wherever possible to open the eyes of any thoughtless maidens by kindly, tactful words, to the

harm they are doing, and generally to urge, for the honour of Christian womanhood, that in our present position of grave national danger there should be greater thoughtfulness and self-control, and less freedom of manner than usual on the part of all girls and women. This should never be forgotten in intercourse with our foreign guests who otherwise might misjudge us.

In many places mothers have valuable helpers in the guiding and guarding of their daughters in the Women Patrols started through the agency of the National Union of Women Workers, who have formed a band for the special work, while the war lasts, of sympathetically helping girls in every possible way during their hours of recreation. Young people are introduced, if they wish, to pleasant guilds, classes, and clubs. To some of the latter they can bring their soldier friends.

It would be a grand thing if, at this time of enormous additions to the army, mothers of all classes would persuade the fathers to

warn their sons who are about to enter any branch of it against the two deadly snares of the professional temptress and of drink. Where necessary, a word of advice might be added to the youths on discretion in their behaviour towards the innocent but foolish followers of the drum. Probably, there is no profession, no kind of work, in which these two temptations are so strong as the army. Its good and its evil conduce to the same result—its gay and gallant spirit, which is shown in all the beautiful letters from the front, of which the mothers of to-day may be proud ; its outward glitter and charm, its dulness in peace-time, and otherwise, when large bodies of men with the hot blood of youth are herded together with insufficient occupation ; the generally easy-going and guileless character of the soldier. Even the brotherly bond between the young warriors—which goes further, perhaps, than does the bond between any other co-workers—may hasten a soldier's downfall—that bond which, when in after years dangers are past and old comrades

meet and chat together, produces "shop talk" fascinating to listeners. The soldiers' enemies have not to be sought ; they await him and beset him. How many lives of the fairest promise have been dragged under thereby ! It has been said by army men : " If only I had known as a youngster what I had to face in the army, I should not have tumbled headlong into pitfalls."

It is important beyond words that men should take with them into the army the *habit* of soberness, for otherwise the temptations to intemperance are overwhelming.

As regards the body, army doctors say that their sick and wounded patients who do not take stimulants have the best chance of recovery. Mothers can do a most helpful piece of work by trying to induce their families to resolve neither to drink nor give intoxicants during the war. In times of excitement a very little drink may go a long way in doing harm. Without making people drunk it may put folly into the head, utterly changing the character of the person for the time being. It might

do this with a well-disposed youth and maiden taking a moderate glass together just to keep up their spirits before saying farewell—with consequences sad and bad.

We all know that some of the last words of that noble old soldier, Lord Roberts, were to implore every one to abstain from “treating” the soldiers, which he knew had been done to their injury. It is sad that friendly feelings towards our refugee guests have sometimes been shown in the same unfriendly way—in some cases by girls and women, to the distress of the hosts.

The women’s “League of Honour” is an excellent Union of which the members sign a twofold resolution: to abstain from drinking or giving intoxicants during the war, and to guard purity by every means in their power. In some places large numbers of all classes and ages have joined. It would often be a relief to any one who might be expected to “treat” another to say, “I have signed the pledge of the ‘League of Honour.’” All particulars of this League can be obtained from the

Mothers' Union office, Church House, Westminster. At any rate, we can all act upon the principles of this League, and try to induce the young people to do the same.

The vast dark war cloud which has settled down over our land has for its silver lining the loving service which it makes possible to us all. Perhaps of this the highest kind is "neighbouring," as opportunity offers, the widows and wives of the fighters. It is deplorably sad, but not strange, that some of these poor dear women should drink to drown their sorrow, or that others in their loneliness seem to be drifting like a ship without a rudder and leading careless lives. Unhappily, it is even true that there have been cases of unfaithfulness to the husband fighting for his country. It is an angelic task to try to convince these unfortunate ones that wandering from the straight path always produces deadly increase of unhappiness, and that the one remedy for whatever is amiss in our lives is trust in the Love of God.

From many sources the joyful news comes

that the soldiers at the front have been drawn nearer to God by the war. When any one is face to face with death the unseen world *must* become real. Army chaplains rejoice in the great demand for their services. But it is not only to those amidst the horrors of battle that a new light shines ; this is also the case with many dwellers at home, and the same is true in the lands of our allies.

Up to last July there was very much thought about pleasure, and about every one having " a good time," and many forgot that the one thing to produce *lasting* happiness for young and old is to live in the remembrance that we are not *only* creatures of this earth. Any suffering is to be welcomed if it helps us to feel, each one for ourselves, that we *belong* to the unseen spiritual world around us, which is one of Love, and that it is as *real* as the world we see. Earthly sunshine is given and taken away, but if it is quenched in darkness the Love light shines more brightly from that invisible world upon those to

whom that world is *real*, and gives wonderful comfort and help.

The war will be worth whatever it costs if the result of it is to lighten the darkness of eyes which hitherto have been fixed upon the mean things of earth, and to bless us, every one, with a brighter shining of the Dayspring from on high. May the great Prayer Union of the Church do its part in this time of world-wide tribulation by meeting together at Church as often as possible for the highest Service of all—Holy Communion, and for Intercession Services, and by the constant perseverance of its members in private prayer.

Let us offer up continually the disciples' prayer—and the answer will keep us brave and patient and hopeful through whatever may be in the future for us. That prayer is, "Lord, increase our faith."

THE END

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